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*Raphanus Raphanistrum*, L.—A double seed-pod was found, with each of the divisions perfect and filled with seeds, but united at the base and having a common stalk.

"*Twin*" *apples* were unusually numerous during the past autumn. These offer excellent examples of syncarpy, or the adhesion of fruits.

Houghton Farm, Mountainville, N. Y. W. E. STONE.

## Botanical Notes.

*The Lignified Snake from Brazil.*—In a brief note in the December number of the BULLETIN, Dr. Gray, referring to an illustrated account of a lignified snake published in our November number, expressed an opinion that there was no snake in the case, and stated that, at the moment of writing, he had not time to offer the two credible explanations of the phenomenon that had suggested themselves to him. In the current number of the *American Journal of Science* we find these two explanations given, and we quote them herewith:

"Through the kindness of the Brazilian Minister," says, Dr. Gray, "we have seen and examined the original specimen, and have been presented with an electrotype of it. It is a great curiosity. The resemblance to a snake is wonderfully close, although 'the scales and cephalic plates,' which M. Olivier identifies with those of a particular Brazilian snake, exist only in a lively imagination. The snake-like surface is covered by delicate meshes of woody fibres; and here and there particular fibres of woody threads can be traced from the body to the woody surface. The adopted explanation requires us to suppose that a snake had forced his way between the bark and the wood of a living tree in a position exactly under a grub or a larva; had perished there when within half an inch of its prey; was somehow preserved from decay, even to the eye-sockets and the markings of the skin, until a woody growth had formed, the elements of which replaced the whole superficial structure of the animal—until the animal was lignified!

"Two other and more probable explanations have suggested themselves. One is that the snake-like body is of the nature of a root, an aerial root, like those of a *Clusia* or a *Ficus*, which was making its way between bark and wood; and that the supposed larva is an incipient root of the same kind. The other supposes that the sinuous course is the track of a wood-eating larva or some kind of insect, the burrowing of which had not destroyed the overlying liber: consequently the new growth filling the space (except at certain points) has naturally assumed the likeness of a snake. This explanation was suggested by Professor Wadsworth, of Cambridge, examining the specimen along with the writer; and it is to be preferred. Still, that head and neck should be so well outlined, and the former so well represent a pair of orbits, were surely most wonderful. But a close inspection of the electrotype showed that there had been some cutting away at the right side of the neck, and that the narrowing there was in part factitious; and less decisive indications suggested that other outlines had been touched up. The subsequent inspection of the original confirmed this; and likewise enlightened us about the eyes. For the left orbit was found to occur, not in a woody structure, like that of the right side, but in a dark material having the appearance of pitch or cement of some sort.

"We may rest assured that whatever there may be which is factitious in this most curious *lusus naturæ* originated before it came into the hands of His Excellency the Brazilian Minister at Washington. If these marks were not discerned by any of the Parisian *savants*—which we are slow to believe—they are less likely to have been noticed by Señor Lopez Netto, whose honor and good faith are incontestible."

The character of the object might, it seems to us, have been at once determined by making a transverse section to ascertain whether the serpentine form contained within it a bony frame-work, which, in the situation where the alleged lignification was detected, would naturally have proved imperishable.

*Action of Poisons on the Petals of Flowers.*—A. Anthony Nesbit, F.C.S., states in the *Journal of Science* that he has made some experiments on the action of various substances on the life of flowers, and for this purpose selected some of the best known alkaloids, viz., strychnine, solanine, digitaline, quinidine, atropine, quinine, cinchonine, picrotoxine, aconitine, brucine and morphine, using one-quarter per cent. and one per cent. solutions. The alkaloid of tobacco being very difficult to obtain pure, owing to its rapid oxidation, 5 per cent. and 20 per cent. solutions of tobacco (bird's eye) were used in its stead. The flower chosen for experiment was the *Narcissus*, and the results showed that there was here a wide field for long and patient investigation.

Of all the twelve solutions, tobacco proved, in a very marked manner, to be most destructive to the life of the flower of the *Narcissus;* the remaining eleven poisons, though but slowly injurious, nevertheless in some instances showed marked difference of effect, or, it may be said, symptom. Thus strychnine, next in poisonous power to tobacco, drew the petals upward, and made them dry and brittle, symptoms also exhibited by solanine poisoning, while quinidine and several other alkaloids rendered the petals limp and rotten. Morphine, one of the least poisonous (to the *Narcissus*) of the alkaloids experimented with, without destroying the flower, curiously enough imparted to the petals a flaccidity resembling that of the petals of the poppy.

*The Fungi of Cincinnati.*—The Catalogue of Plants collected in the vicinity of Cincinnati, Ohio, during the years 1834–44, by Thomas G. Lea (Cincinnati, 1849) contains a list of fungi, with notes on the species and descriptions of many new ones by Rev. M. J. Berkeley. The Cincinnati Society of Natural History has rendered a great service to the many students of mycology in this country by republishing, in the current number of its *Journal* (Vol. v., No. 4), all that pertains to fungi in the above-named catalogue, which has long been out of print and is now inaccesssible. We are indebted for a copy of the paper in pamphlet form to Mr. Davis L. James, through whose instrumentality, we presume, the Society was induced to reproduce it.